

RULES BASED CUSTOM CATALOGS GENERATED FROM A CENTRAL CATALOG DATABASE FOR MULTIPLE ENTITIES

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

10 An arbitrary number of custom catalogs for an arbitrary number of customers can be
published from a centrally maintained database of seller catalog data. The custom catalogs
are subsets of the catalog database, and are generated in accordance with a set of rules that
defines the scope of the content of the custom catalog. The rule sets define a series of
15 sequential searches by which a subset of the item SKUs contained in the database are
returned. For extranet buyers, the subsets for each rule set are maintained in a subset table.
Whenever a user authorized by a particular buyer wishes to browse the unique catalog subset
assigned to that buyer, any queries regarding the catalog will result first in a search of the full
catalog database, and the results from the full search are pared down to only those items the
SKUs for which have entries in the subset table associated with the buyer's assigned subset.
20 A buyer-authorized user browses the catalog using a standard PC and browser, and SKUs
returned to the user based on the user's query will include descriptive information such as
descriptive text, pictures etc., which are displayed by the browser. Buyers who are not
coupled to the seller via an extranet connection can have customized subsets of the total
catalog database produced in accordance with their own rule sets, and formatted and
25 delivered off-line for incorporation into their web sites and procurement networks.